

# *Cuba's contribution to international efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic*

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27 March 2020 23:52

Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, March 27, 2020

Excerpt

Cuba's contribution to international efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic

In the context of the current tough confrontation between humanity and the coronavirus pandemic, I would like to focus on the diametrically opposite characteristics of individual members of the international community.

On Wednesday, the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Russia, Gerardo Penalver Portal, held an online news conference at the Russian Federation's Foreign Ministry. He spoke about the measures taken by his country and the selfless aid provided by the Cubans to other countries. As you may be aware, of the many Caribbean countries, including members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, only Cuba agreed to allow the British cruise ship, MS Braemar, to dock 40 km from Cuban capital on March 18-19 with five confirmed COVID-19 cases on board and 52 passengers with symptoms of the illness. As a result of this humanitarian operation, over 1,000 passengers and crew members were transported to the UK.

Aware of the risks to its citizens, Havana nonetheless responded to Italy's call for help and sent 52 doctors to the Lombardy region. In addition, Cuban doctors are working to save lives in Venezuela, Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, as well as Suriname and Jamaica. The medicines that proved their efficiency, in particular, in China, including the Cuban-made Interferon Alfa 2B, are being delivered to those in need.

However, not everyone is acting so nobly or contributing to this worthy cause. The Island of Freedom is lending a helping hand and showing impressive examples of magnanimity, but there are also those who do not seem to like these efforts. Washington was quick to come up with a response and warned about the alleged "dangers" of cooperating with Cuba in fighting the coronavirus. Clearly, this is part of the information war. All those myths and narratives about an alleged threat coming from Russia and Russia's aggressive policy are just that – a myth. Now, with Russia providing humanitarian aid to Italy, and Cuba and China providing humanitarian aid to a number of countries, we can see what information aggression really looks like. Reports quoting unconfirmed sources appeared post-haste in various media to the effect that this assistance was ineffective, unneeded and unnecessary. What stands behind this? It's politics. They claim that, in fact, the goals have not been achieved or completely different goals had been set. I think all these things have one thing in common: unnamed sources, which exposes the fact that this is nothing but propaganda. When there's a principled position, some kind of resistance and rejection of certain steps, in particular, in the humanitarian sphere, it makes sense to talk about them without mentioning one's name. It seems that taking a position and clearly outlining one's approaches, on the contrary, would be a position worthy of respect. However, a vast amount of material in relation to a number of countries has become available. Russia is no exception with respect to the allegation that the humanitarian aid provided by it is ineffective, which, I think, caused a sense of pity, particularly among Italians. I saw all the statements made by the government of Italy, representatives of the regions and ordinary people who were disgusted to see fake reports and acts of information war.

I will not list all of Washington's accusations against Cuba prompted by the fact that it is supplying humanitarian aid, because it would be unseemly to go over them again. It is humiliating even for those who are behind them. Clearly, someone has a bad taste in their mouth caused by the gratitude expressed by the British government for saving the people, although this is strange for humanity of the 21st century. As if on a cue coming from the capital, the central US media unanimously decided to ignore this fact, not to mention the assistance provided by the Cubans to their neighbors.

Unfortunately, there are heroes and antiheroes in any situation. We can see them today. It seems that we are really living in a period that has been shown in many films. These days, the phrase "all step out of the shadows" often comes to my mind.

Once again, we urge everyone to come to their senses and to take the side of unity for all of humanity in the face of the impending common threat. We urge those who, in this difficult global situation, are trying to make things look even worse and are pursuing a policy of aggression and destabilization to come to senses.



**Radio Habana Cuba**